

7th Grade Extended Response Practice Prompt

GRADE 7 SOCIAL STUDIES PRACTICE TEST

SECTION 2

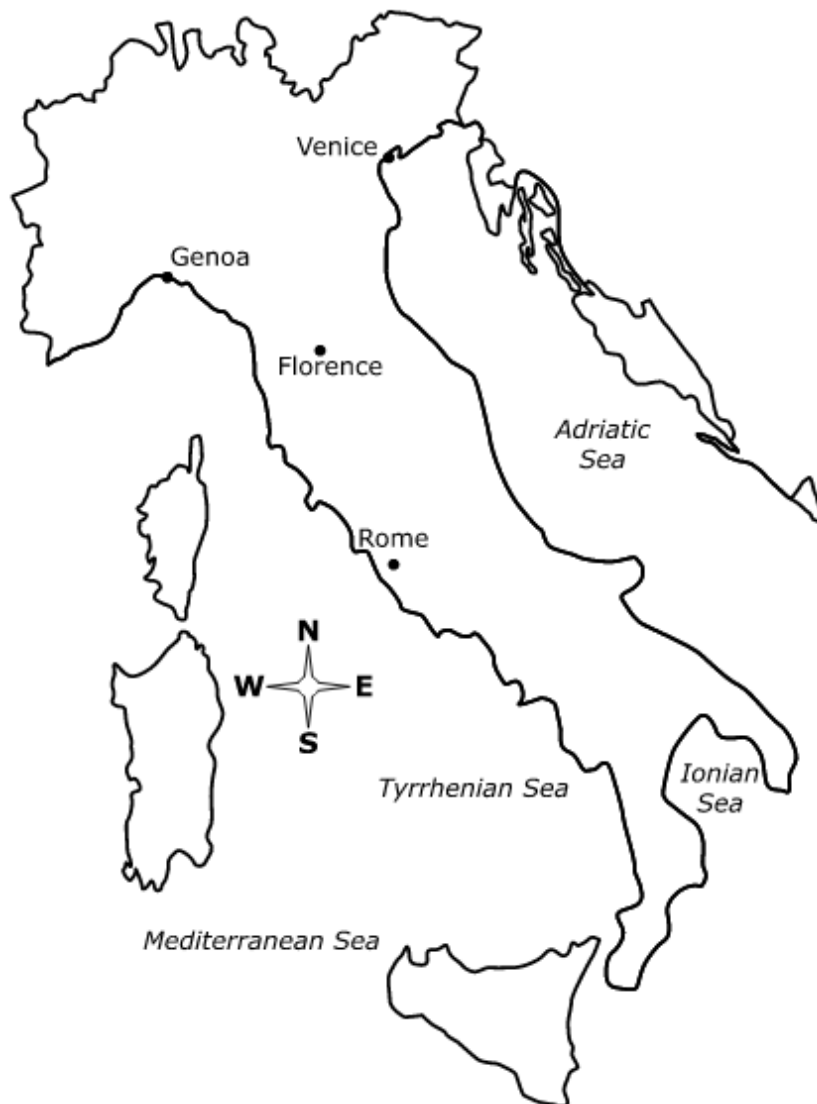
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The map and the excerpt below are about the first head of the Medici family of the Italian city-state of Florence.

Explain how the location, political system, and economies of the Italian city-states were different from those towns and cities in other parts of Europe.

- How do those differences help explain why the Renaissance started in the Italian city-states instead of elsewhere in Europe?
- Use evidence from the information provided and your knowledge of world history to support your answer.

Florence and the Other Italian City-States, ca. 1500



It is difficult to recognize Cosimo de' Medici as a statesman. . . . For it may seem to us no great achievement for a man to make himself master of a little city-state, with a few thousand inhabitants. . . .

. . . Florence was far more independent . . . than the medieval . . . towns. . . . And Florence was more than a state, she was even in miniature an empire. since she ruled over several subject towns. . . .

Florence, too, was a commercial state; the possession of land was . . . the least important part, of wealth. . . .

The political conditions in which Cosima had to work were largely those of modern, not of medieval politics. . . . The position of the Pope was hardly distinguished from that of the head of a secular state; feudalism had ceased to be a force in politics.

— *Cosimo de' Medici*, Katherine Dorothea Ewart Vernon, 1899

Source: Public Domain

The passage below discusses information from a book by Niccolò Machiavelli on the history of Florence.

Lorenzo de' Medici deserves much of the credit for making Florence a leading city of the Italian peninsula. He devoted himself to the development of the city and of his own family. For the city, he used the abundant vacant land to lay out new streets and line them with houses. Under his direction, the city was enlarged and beautified. His concern for the recent wars in which Florence was involved led him to fortify the castle of Firenzuola. He undertook this effort to assure greater quiet and security. The improved fortress would be able to resist and combat its enemies at a greater distance from the city. He also began the restoration of the Poggio Imperiale in the mountains towards Bologna in the direction of Siena. It too was fortified in the latest designs of the time.

In peaceful times, de' Medici was a great patron of anyone that excelled in any art, as well as of scholars and of learning. He sponsored activities to entertain the citizenry and keep them united. Festivals that included jousts, archery, and feats of bravery from earlier times became popular among the people. He worked to maintain the growing economy of the city and to honor nobility and the wealthy. In short, he worked tirelessly to promote Florence and its citizens.